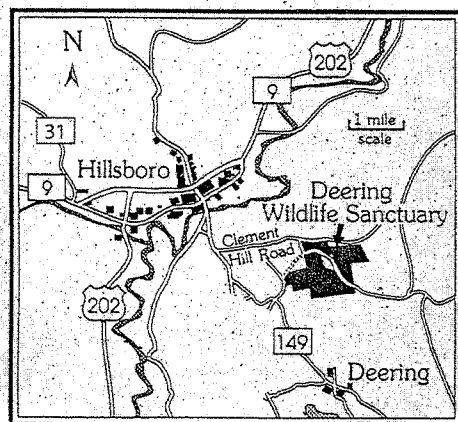


The Deering Wildlife Sanctuary is open throughout the year during daylight hours. Although there are trails for your enjoyment, this sanctuary's primary purpose is to provide habitat for wildlife. In order to minimize disturbance to the plants and animals here, we ask that you observe the following rules:

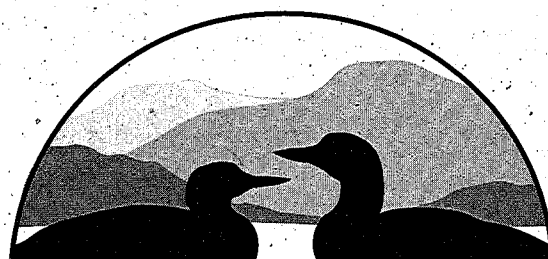
1. Only foot travel is permitted.
2. Smoking, swimming, camping, fires, trapping, metal detecting, and bottle digging are prohibited. Deer hunting is permitted on the land north of North Road only, and no other hunting is allowed.
3. Please keep to the marked trails and do not collect or in any way disturb any plants or animals.
4. Pets are allowed in designated areas only and must be kept on leash.
5. Please carry out all trash and litter.
6. Be prepared for country walking.



## How to get to the Deering Sanctuary:

Take Routes 9 and 202 to Hillsboro Center/Route 149 exit and drive into Hillsboro. At the light in the center of town, turn south on Route 149. Drive one mile, then turn left onto Clement Hill Road. After approximately 1.5 miles, Clement Hill Road makes a right turn. The year-round parking area is 0.4 mile on the right.

**Please note that winter and spring road conditions can make travel difficult on the last section of Clement Hill Road.**



The Audubon Society of New Hampshire is an independent statewide membership organization whose mission is to protect New Hampshire's natural environment for wildlife and for people. It operates nature centers throughout the state that provide educational programs for children and adults. The Society is also involved in research projects, from developing a plan to preserve the biodiversity of a rapidly growing state to monitoring many of New Hampshire's endangered species. It also protects thousands of acres of wildlife habitat through its sanctuaries program and advocates for sound public policy on environmental issues. For information on the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, membership, volunteering, programs, and publications, contact:

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Printed on  recycled paper.

If you do not want to keep this guide, please return it to the mailbox at the trailhead.

*Text by Stephen Walker. Map and cover art (of a Wood Duck) by Mike Milligan.*

## Deering Wildlife Sanctuary

## Deering, New Hampshire



Audubon Society of New Hampshire

## About the Sanctuary

In 1979, longtime conservationist and Audubon friend Ruth Crary Young donated 485 acres of her land to the Society after she accepted Audubon's wildlife habitat management proposal. The gift was accompanied by an endowment to help support the basic maintenance of the property, which enables Audubon to fulfill its stewardship obligation and ensures the continued protection and preservation of this wildlife habitat for the enjoyment and enrichment of future generations.

A 21-acre parcel of land in the middle of the Sanctuary, which includes the circa-1830 Ermin Smith Farm homestead and another home, remain in private ownership, but there is a conservation easement that protects this land from future development. Ruth Crary Young died in 1988, leaving an additional

bequest to the Society to support Audubon's land conservation program.

The original gift provided the seed for the continuing land protection of the area. In addition to the conservation easement on the private property within the Sanctuary, Audubon currently has Grantee interest in three easements on adjoining properties, which total 51 acres. The Grantors of these conservation easements recognized the importance of protecting the conservation values of the land and preserving the character of the town of Deering for all to enjoy. At the same time, the Grantors, and subsequent owners, will enjoy the continued use of these protected lands for forestry, maple sugaring, and other activities. The easements protect these lands in perpetuity, with the owners serving as conservation stewards of their land.

In 1997, another 133 acres, the "Lazy Brown" homestead, were added to the Sanctuary, bringing the total mosaic of protected lands to 690 acres. The land north of North Road was opened to deer hunting.

Building a large block of protected lands is very important for wildlife. For many species of animals, from moose to invertebrates, unfragmented lands are important for maintaining a sustainable population. Fewer roads means less mortality for migrating turtles, frogs, and salamanders. Corridors of protected lands that link one area to another are essential for species that move from one place to another or have larger territories. The protected lands and wetlands that comprise the Deering Wildlife Sanctuary will continue to provide habitat for wildlife, scenic enjoyment and recreational opportunities for visitors, and a healthy environment for future generations.

## Wildlife and Forest Habitat Management

In its initial management proposal to Ruth Young, Audubon suggested that the land become an outdoor classroom for the study of wildlife habitat management. The property, originally named the Deering Wildlife Habitat Management Reserve, has continued to serve that purpose to this day.

Initially, management practices were conducted on small forest plots to encourage tree species, such as white oak, hemlock, and aspen, that are known to provide both food and cover for wildlife. Remnants of former apple orchards were discovered and opened up to "release" the apple trees into productivity for wildlife. Nest boxes were placed around the pond and wetlands and in the open areas of neighboring proper-

ties to encourage species such as Eastern Bluebirds, Great Crested Flycatchers, Wood Ducks, and Hooded Mergansers.

The construction of an earth and boulder dam in the 1930s transformed a forested area into the 36-acre Black Fox Pond. Because it owes its existence to the dam, the pond is considered a private pond. The shallow depth and low water flow prevent the pond from supporting sport fish populations. However, managed for wildlife, the pond is a haven for all forms of aquatic life. Dragonflies, diving beetles, leeches, crayfish, turtles, sundew, bladderwort, bog mats, frogs, mink, kingfishers, and Great Blue Herons just scratch the surface of the biodiversity of the greater pond habitat. Seasonally, it is used by migrants, including Ospreys, Common Mergansers, Canada Geese. Even the occasional moose has been seen. The pond is part of the Piscataquog River watershed.

Deering Wildlife Sanctuary has been the subject of numerous graduate student and class studies focusing on natural resource inventories, which document the Sanctuary's habitats, flora, and fauna. Additionally, the Sanctuary has served as a field site for Audubon camps, school programs, and innumerable field trips and workshops. The Sanctuary was also designated a "Watchable Wildlife" area by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department as part of a statewide wildlife viewing program.

In 1995, Audubon joined the UNH Cooperative Extension Forest Stewardship Incentive Program. This program provided the basis for a management plan that included extensive bird and flora inventories and three 20-acre experimental forest management project areas. These areas will continue to be the subjects of further study and possibly future forest management.

## Trail Information

Three trail loops constitute the Sanctuary's trail system. Each trail is combined with portions of Clement Hill Road to form the loops. Clement Hill Road has "summer maintenance only" beyond the Smith Farm and is closed to vehicles October through April. Dogs on a leash are allowed on the Patten Farm Trail only.

### Black Fox Pond Trail

Yellow markers

Loop 1.7 miles (includes 0.1 mile on Clement Hill Road, 0.5 mile on the Ruth Ethel Clement Path, and 1.1 miles on the Black Fox Pond Trail)

About 90 minutes

Most of this loop skirts the shore of the 36-acre Black Fox Pond, beginning with a descent to the pond and ending with an uphill climb. From the parking area, walk west up Clement Hill Road 0.1 mile to the Ruth Ethel Clement Path, which begins at a sharp curve in Clement Hill Road. This abandoned town road heads southwest to the north tip of Black Fox Pond, where it crosses a culvert. About 400 feet after the culvert, the marked Black Fox Pond Trail will turn left, leaving the Ruth Clement Path. The trail on the southern shore is cool and shady under the hemlocks, which dominate the shore edge. It winds around small seeps and shady glens, where slow-moving waters disappear underground and reappear. Several points along the trail afford wonderful views of the pond. The trail winds around a marsh that is surrounded by an unusual boulder pile, which is a prime porcupine den area. Look for the gnarled and stunted hemlocks that serve as winter food for the porcupines. The trail returns to the pond edge and continues to the dam. Several beaver lodges, active and inactive, can be spotted here. The pond has several floating bog mats, which are dominated by leather-leaf. Two rock outcrops are frequently used for nesting by Canada Geese and American Black Ducks; they are also resting and feeding areas for otter, raccoon, and muskrat.

From the dam, you can walk northeast about 500 feet to Clement Hill Road and access the other two trails or continue around the pond on the Black Fox Pond Trail. The sunnier-eastern shore is dominated by white pine and hardwoods and is more open. The trail crosses a stone wall onto private land and again crosses a stone wall to reenter Audubon land. Please remain on the trail and respect the privacy of the private landowners. The trail now begins its ascent back up to the parking area, first through magnificent large white pines and then through an old orchard, which is maintained for wildlife, and, finally, through typical northern hardwood forests.

### Smith Brook Trail

Yellow markers

Loop 1 mile plus 0.5 mile from the parking area

About 1 hour

From the parking area, turn right (south) and walk 0.5 mile down Clement Hill Road and pick up the Smith Brook Trail on the eastern side of the road, across the road from the trail to the dam. The trail skirts below a ridge of ledge outcrop. Travel quietly here to avoid scaring any Wood Ducks that are in the beaver pond that will soon come into view. This pond was created by beavers in 1990. Formerly red maple and white pine woods, only white pine snags remain. This is the preferred habitat of Wood Ducks, and Great Blue Herons have also nested here; look for them in the white pine snags from May to July. Please note that both of these species are very sensitive to sudden sounds. On June nights, there is a deafening chorus of the reclusive and well-camouflaged gray tree frog, *Hyla versicolor*. During the winter, this area, which is sunny and out of the wind, can be alive with chickadees and woodpeckers, which seek shelter in tree cavities and find food in the rotting trees. The trail continues through maturing white pine woods and joins Smith Brook at the outlet of what is currently a beaver meadow. Now filled with grasses and sedges that grow up to six feet high, these beaver meadows once provided a source of food for the livestock of early settlers. The trail follows the edge of the brook to a bridge

and then returns upstream on the opposite side, where it joins an old logging road. The trail continues down the logging road, meets the Patten Farm Trail, and then heads back to the brook and Clement Hill Road. Turn right to return to the trailhead and parking area.

### Patten Farm Trail

Red markers

Loop 1.2 miles (includes 0.2 mile section of the Smith Brook Trail, 0.5 mile on Patten Farm Trail, 0.5 mile on Clement Hill Road), plus a little more than 0.5 mile from the parking area

About 90 minutes

This trail is open to dogs on a leash.

The Patten Farm Trail, combined with a length of Clement Hill Road, is a relatively flat, easy trail. This trail, including Clement Hill Road, harkens back to yesteryear. It passes two cellar holes, and there is a short side excursion off Clement Hill Road to one of Deering's early cemeteries. Much of the woodlands along the Patten Farm Trail appear younger than those of most of the Sanctuary because of more recent management activities. Like most of southern New Hampshire, Deering saw its population and agriculture peak in the 1850s. With the opening of the west and the migration to industrial centers after the Civil War, the rural areas of New England experienced dramatic declines in population. What remains today on this sanctuary are miles of stone walls and a few cellar holes.

Begin at the southern end of the Smith Brook Trail (a little more than 0.5 mile south on Clement Hill Road from the parking area and about 430 feet south of the northern end of the Smith Brook Trail). Proceed 0.2 mile up the Smith Brook Trail and then bear right onto the red-blazed Patten Farm Trail. After 0.5 mile, the trail rejoins Clement Hill Road. Almost immediately across the road and a little to the east of the junction of the trail and Clement Hill Road is one of Deering's early cemeteries, which is located within the Sanctuary. A right turn (north) onto Clement Hill Road from the trail will take you back to the parking area about 1 mile up Clement Hill Road.

